THE CHELTENHAM GUIDE;

OR,

MEMOIRS

OF THE

B—N—R—D FAMILY

CONTINUED.

IN A SERIES OF

POETICAL EPISTLES.

Fies nobilium tu quoque FONTIUM. HOR. OD.

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M DCC LXXXI.

ADVERTISEMENT.

EVERY information reſpecting the B—N—R— Family will, it is preſumed, be acceptable to the P—blick; and although the reſpective characters have altered conſiderably their mode of thinking and acting, ſince they firſt appeared on the *beau monde* at Bath: yet their hiſtory in the following epiſtles will, it is hoped, be found ſtrictly conſiſtent with the ſphere in which they moved at Cheltenham.

The moſt trifling anecdotes of diſtinguiſhed characters, the Editor of theſe MEMOIRS is convinced, are generally eſteemed grateful; and he hopes for *pardon* at leaſt, if not *praiſe*, for endeavouring to gratify the publick curioſity by furniſhing the preſent diſplay.

A

View from the Top of the Well-Walk,

CHELTENHAM.

AN APOSTROPHE.

DELIGHTFUL ſite! where Pleaſure reigns,
And FLORA's gayeſt ſweets:
Not fairer ſhines fam'd TEMPE's plains,
Where ev'ry beauty meets.

All hail! I feel poetick fire,
When CHELT'NHAM is my theme;
And ſtrike with deeper ſounds the lyre,
That pants for ardent fame.

Let AGANIPPE's ſacred ſpring
Inſpire lymphatick bards;
While I the waters taſte, and ſing,
That bleſs'd HEYGEIA guards.

Let BAIÆ boaſt her boiling wave,
Of ſov'reign pow'r to warm;
There BLADUD ſtill his hogs may lave,
And Folly's empreſs charm.

By me be ne'er it's revels known;
Thoſe ſcenes of *form* and vice;
Where Brother SIM acquir'd the *ton*,
But fell by cards and dice.

Ill-fated youth! affection's tear
Has oft for thee been ſhed:
O, had'ſt thou cur'd thy vapours here,
Nor cring'd for courtly bread *!

Here fragrance fills the balmy air,
And ev'ry draught is health;
No CORMORANT here ſpreads his ſnare
To drain the purſe of wealth.

* The publick may, perhaps, be anxious to learn the fate of SIMKIN B—N—R—D. Having *dipped* his eſtate at BATH, and other publick places, by no *uncommon* extravavance, he became a dangler at levees, in order to repair his ſhattered finances. His NAME ſoon made him noticed by many great men in the moſt elevated ſtations, and enſured his future ſucceſs.

Here *real* PIETY appears,
From cant and frenzy free;
Nor fills the mind with racks and fears,
But hope and charity!

No wild enthuſiaſt's gloomy brain
Here marrs her lovely face;
Or tries her honours to diſtain,
And ſpoil her native grace.

The joys of love, the ſocial pow'rs,
Here ſpread their bliſsful train;
And ev'ry Muſe muſt haunt the bow'rs
Where Health and Quiet reign.

Here walks, beſet with branching trees,
A grateful ſhade beſtow;
When Summer's unrelenting breeze
Enervates all below.

O! let me here with ——— ſtray,
And mark yon ſhining ſpire;
See Nature ev'ry charm diſplay,
To wake the Muſe's fire!

And oft admire, with raviſh'd eyes,
Each lovely ſmiling view:
There, hills that meet the concave ſkies,
And loſe their tops in blue;

Here meads, by FLORA's bounty bleſs'd,
Array'd in lively green;
And villas deep in woods embrac'd,
That chear the varied ſcene.

ELYSIAN vale! thy bounds I'll trace,
When SOL firſt paints the ſky;
And when he ſinks with broaden'd face,
In haſte to cloſe his eye.

And oft as Morn ſhall ſhed her dews,
Fair CHELT'NAM, let thy ſpring,
With copious draughts refreſh the Muſe,
Thy matchleſs joys to ſing.

THE CHELTENHAM GUIDE,

LETTER I.

TRISTRAM B—N—R—D, Esq. to RANTRUM SQUASH, Gent.

FROM CHELT'NAM, dear RANT, this epistle I send,
Where shortly I hope to hear from my friend:
And, believe me, each letter with int'rest I'll pay,
If the wenches of PINDUS but favour my lay;
If the nymphs of this fountain their suitor approve,
And the patron of *splayfeet* two B—N—R—DS love.

As SIMKIN, my brother, has got a fine knack,
At turning a period, or shuffling a pack;

And PRUE well can paint how ſhe kick'd in the night,
When laden with grace, and endow'd with the light:
Why ſhould not I try our amuſements to ſing,
And twine a ſmall wreath to the fame of this ſpring!

Know, then, I arriv'd here laſt Friday, with PRUE,
And JENNY, to wit and to gaiety true;
Tho' her beauty is ſomewhat the worſe for the wear,
Few women ſuch ſenſe and good qualities ſhare:
She is free and engaging, good-humour'd and kind,
With a heart that to pity is ever inclin'd;
And I truſt, in the courſe of this freſh expedition,
She'll both alter her name, and amend her condition.

But PRUDENCE, my ſiſter, is poorly in health,
And for ever keeps praying or hymning by ſtealth:

That

That ROGER at *Bath* has ſo addled her brain,
I'm afraid ſhe will never her ſenſes regain.
'Tis a pity thoſe raſcals no rope can prevent,
From ſpoiling a *ſinner*, by making a *ſaint*;
From draining our pockets by preaching damnation,
And teaching new methods of regeneration!

The doctors have ſent her to drink at this well,
In hopes all her fancies and whims to expel:
For the weaker, they ſay, that their patients are brought,
The ſounder their reaſon, and juſter their thought;
And they mean, here, by purging, weak broths, and herb teas,
To ſtrike at the root of her mental diſeaſe.
And I think they are right, as I'll prove by a ſtory,
Which pray overlook, if you read in a hurry;

But if ever you print it, by Jupiter Ammon,
I'll hang you as high as the Perſian did Haman!

A ſquire and a juſtice of peace, but no fool,
Had a calf of a ſon, who had juſt quitted ſchool:
In the heart of this oaf the cook kindled a fire,
(No higher his notions had learn'd to aſpire.)
One day, ere the jack half it's journey had run,
He thus to expreſs his warm paſſion begun.

" My DOLLY, my deareſt! my ſweeteſt, my beſt!
" With you, or without you, I'm wretched or bleſs'd!
" Your charms are my joy, yet you rob me of eaſe,
" While I cheriſh this ſoft, this bewitching diſeaſe!
" O bleſs me with ſmiles, and my paſſion approve,
" Or I die at your feet the ſad victim of love!"

The

The father o'erheard his fine ſpeeches, and ſmil'd,
For he knew how to *doctor* a love-ſmitten child:
And ſoon in his boſom revolved a ſcheme,
To cure the diſeaſe, and extinguiſh the flame.

Each morn in his diſh, with due caution convey'd,
A plentiful doſe of ſtrong j——p was laid.
The doſe took effect—the youth fainted and groan'd—
But yet had not fully his folly aton'd.
Still weaker and weaker he grew ev'ry day;
His mother ſhed tears—DOLLY ſat in diſmay:
A phyſician was ſent for, who hemm'd and preſcrib'd;
But in vain the preſcription—the doctor was brib'd.

At length (to make ſhort) the ſly juſtice thought fit,
(When convinc'd the diſeaſe to the cure would ſubmit)

To forbear the ſtrong drug—the cook was diſcharg'd—
And maſter, by phyſick, from Cupid enlarg'd;
His flame quite forgot——So may ROGER by PRUE,
And her thoughts and her manners be model'd anew.

I likewiſe came here for a few ſlight repairs,
Such as cleanſing my blood for the good of my heirs;
For a ſcorbutick taint in the family runs—
Our fathers were bad, and ſtill worſe are their ſons.
But an able phyſician who lives in this town,
And adds very much to it's fame and renown,
Has declar'd that theſe waters are ſov'reign to cure
All the evils which wretched ſcorbuticks endure;
That they cheriſh the ſpirits, the ſyſtem improve,
Diſeaſes prevent, and their cauſes remove.

If ſuch their effect, let the loud trump of Fame,
To the ſons of affliction their virtues proclaim;
Let diſeaſe and misfortune quick hither repair,
Drink health from the ſpring, and be rid of their care.

At preſent we lodge at the ſign of the Swan,
But intend ſoon to move on a much cheaper plan,
To very good rooms, well furniſh'd and neat,
Where weekly the dancers and fidlers all meet.
At the inns here each article's ſold very dear,
From the ſparkling Champaign, to the blood-colour'd beer;
From the ven'ſon that's kept till it ſtink by degrees,
To the raſher of bacon, or ſlice of green cheeſe:
Nor improper—where *water* is drank, to charge high
(As the leſs is your cuſtom) for what you *muſt* buy.

For the firſt time, next Monday, we go in a party,
Firſt to ſuck at the pump, then to eat breakfaſt hearty.
For the company meet ev'ry Monday, I'm told,
Both the young and the gay, and the ugly and old,
To drink tea together, ſtare hard, and talk news,
In a room near as long as his Majeſty's Mews.

How Miſs JENNY will ſhine in her luſtring and gold!
How the beaux will admire, when her charms they behold!
How PRUDENCE will look for ſome good man in black,
Some ſtrolling divine, or ſome ſpiritual quack;
To walk by her ſide as ſhe takes the freſh air,
Or join her at night—in the office of pray'r!
But may TRIST never ſwallow a glaſs of Port wine,
Or meet with good eating when ready to dine,

If

If I watch not her ſteps, as a cat does a mouſe,
Nor ſhall ever a ROGER come into my houſe!
The *rake* may, and welcome; the *fool*, if he pleaſe;
But none that can add to her Bath-caught diſeaſe!

To conclude——

If to write without form, or regard to connection,
Can merit a place in ſome future collection,
I think you'll allow that with SIM I may vie,
Tho' my tale's not ſo long, or my game half ſo high.
For may ſatire, black ſatire! ne'er lift it's fell ſting,
To wound the gay vot'ries of Chelt'nham's *ſweet* ſpring!

With

With this pious good wish I shall wind up my letter,
Which I beg you'll accept, in the place of a better;
And if any OLD WOMAN finds fault with my style,
Pray tell her I rate not her frown or her smile.

CHELTENHAM,
1781.

T—— B——N—R—D.

LETTER

LETTER II.

TRISTRAM B—N—R—D, Eſq. to RANTRUM SQUASH, Gent.

LET *B—h* for it's gamblers and NASH's be known,
It's quacks, and it's doctors, and dealers in ſtone:
Let *Briſtol* for party and pride be renown'd,
And *London* for trade match the nations around:
Let *Witney* for blankets and ſtrong-beer be fam'd,
And *Woodſtock* for tweezers with *Sheffield* be nam'd.
To thee, O fair *Chelt'nham*, the palm will I give,
Where the Loves and the Graces continually live.
Thy proſpects are lovely, thy manners are pleaſing,
And thy waters poſſeſs all the virtues of—*eaſing*.

Thy air is as fine as the fineſt in *France*,
And thy natives as fond of the fiddle and dance.
Thy nymphs in their charms with bright Venus
may vie;
Like her's are the darts that are glanc'd from each eye.
On thy borders a hundred proud Temples appear,
That ſmoke with rich incenſe four months in the year:
From thy ſpring there, the Spleen and the Scurvy retire,
And the aid of Clo'cina with mattins require.
The goddeſs oft hears, like Lucina proves kind,
And diſeaſes ruſh forth in a torrent of wind.

But in vain may I ſtrive in my verſe to comprize
All the objects which charm both my heart and my eyes.
As well might I count (to ſteal from a poet,
And I don't care a d—n if the criticks ſhould know it!)

The ſand on the ſhore, or the leaves in the ſpring,
The fiſh in the ſea, or the birds on the wing.

The rapture is o'er * *!*—nay, begun, I would ſay;
But language is faint all I feel to convey!
Heygeia returning, tranſported I hail;
She throbs in this pulſe, on this heart ſtamps her ſeal;
Each nerve and each joint her bleſs'd influence feels,
Each look and each motion her preſence reveals!
My ſpirits grow lighter, my cares wear away;
I laugh, and I ſing, and I dance, and I play;
And the ladies themſelves have been heard to declare,
That for gaiety, wit, and complexion, and air,
But few at this place with your TRIST can compare.

* An uſual expreſſion, after an author has been writing ſomething remarkably dull.

O bleſs'd be this fount! it in mercy was giv'n,
And the pigeon * that ſhew'd it came winged from heav'n!
It ſurely to cure ev'ry ill was deſign'd,
To heal the weak frame, and pour balm on the mind!
For PRUDENCE more chearful and rational grows,
Nor prates about ROGER, and ſcrews up her noſe:
She now can forget Lady SQUINTUM's grimace,
And alter the pious good form of her face;
Can ſometimes unite with the gay on the walks,
And liſten to Reaſon and H——s when he talks;
And had ſhe not told her NIGHT VISION *in print*,
She might have paſs'd here for a virgin and ſaint;

* CHELTENHAM SPA is ſaid to have been firſt diſcovered by pigeons reſorting to it, they being naturally fond of ſaline impregnations.

Perhaps

Perhaps gain'd Sir SELIM MAC BITEWELL BAREW,
Or a MARQUIS of *Europe*—whom nobody knew.

But while PRUDENCE and I have been mending our health,
Miſs JENNY has wounded a thouſand by ſtealth;
Her charms counteract the effects of this ſpring,
And the wits in her praiſes, their rapſodies ſing.
She is queen of the walk, in the eyes of each beau,
And they ſnuff at our heels, whereſoever we go.
But who ſhe'll prefer, I as yet cannot find,
For nothing's ſo fickle as woman's light mind!
A blind man can better tell rays and refractions,
Than I judge their thoughts, by their looks or their actions.

I doubt

I doubt not, however, ſhe'll pick out the beſt:
Not the rake that's diſeas'd, or the monkey well dreſs'd;
Not the fool who to ſenſe and to merit is blind,
Or the dangling poor frib of equivocal kind.
I am certain, fine taſte, ſenſe and merit, muſt be
The medium thro' which Couſin JENNY will ſee.
And among ſuch a number, it cannot be hard,
To find one deſerving her love and regard.

What a *pow'r* of fine people are now at this place!
From commoners, up to his lordſhip and grace!
What a *pow'r* of fine women, with hair all their own!
A thing that of late years has ſeldom been known!
With faces from Nature that ſhame mimick art,
And beauty to warm the moſt obdurate heart:
With ſenſe and good-humour to vanquiſh the wiſe,
And make e'en the miſer grow free by their eyes.

'Twould

'Twould delight, it would charm you, my friend,
ev'ry morning,
To ſee them parading, and drinking *, and turning!
I am ſure, I was never ſo bleſs'd in my life,
(And few are ſo much, e'en tho' bleſs'd with a wife)
As I've been oft to walk by the deareſt Miſs LACKIT;
And hear the ſweet tongue of the charming Miſs
CLACKIT,
Make the elms, and the pump, and the ball-room, all
ring,
And echo call up from the depths of the ſpring!
Then to ſit down together to tea and French rolls,
While the fiddles ſtruck up, and enchanted our ſouls.
For each morning we've muſick to put us in motion,
To humble ourſelves at Clo'cina's devotion.

* To ſpare the bluſh—it is only meant, *drinking water*.

I have

I have ſeen ſome in tranſport and rapture all o'er,
As if they had never heard catgut before;
And ſome beating time with a good-natur'd leer,
While little Miſs CROTCHET with judgment would ſneer.

In ſhort, I'm unable our pleaſures to draw;
Good-breeding and ſenſe were our guide and our law:
Without form we were gay—good-humour went round,
And mirth and contentment ſociety crown'd;
Till lately an Ape, in the ſhape of a Beau,
With the outlandiſh name of a Monſieur M——u,
Has officially come at the balls to preſide,
To preſerve *etiquette*, and pay homage to pride.

Some

Some uſe there may be in the creature, 'tis true,
Their way to the Temples the ladies to ſhew;
But I ſtill muſt lament, that forms ſhould efface
The native politeneſs and eaſe of this place!
Perhaps you may call me low-liv'd and ill-bred,
But, *ſans* form, I am truly,

Yours,

T—— B—N—R—D.

POSTSCRIPT.

Inclos'd I have ſent ſome heroical verſes,
By a gentleman here, who oft writes and rehearſes;
At preſent I cannot well think of his name,
Tho' he's one who for JENNY profeſſes a flame.

No matter for that—he has ſenſe, and much merit,
And praiſes or blames with a laudable ſpirit.
If you knew all his Ladies, his candour would charm you;
And the beauties he ſings, would entirely diſarm you.
From *Oxf—d* he comes, where ſhortly we go,
As he's promis'd us all the fine things there to ſhew;
And I'm ſure if the Doctors my *ſplayfeet* could ſee,
They would make me A. B. M. A. or D. D.

CHELTENHAM,
1781.

THE

THE ROLL OF BEAUTY.

'TIS beauty calls—bleſs'd Candour guide the lay,
That trembling dares bright ——'s fair pourtray!
O! ſpread thy veil where Reaſon can't approve,
And teach my heart to melt with ſocial love;
With warm regard the lovely to defend,
Or only hint the blemiſh they may mend.
And thou, LUCINDA, ſmile upon the ſtrain,
Or *Pindus'* ſacred maids inſpire in vain!

As midſt the flow'rs that deck ſome vernal bed,
And all their fragrance on the ſenſes ſhed,

The eye, diſtracted, o'er their beauty roves,
Nor can ſelect, but each in turn approves;
So roves the Muſe, ambitious to embrace
The lovelieſt nymph, her blooming wreath to grace:
Nor, PARIS-like, can throw the glittering prize,
While DAPHNE's *ſhape* contends with STELLA's *eyes*;
While PHEBE's *luſtre* ev'ry boſom warms,
And *majeſty* adorns MONIMIA's charms.

Let chance direct——and lo! an angel bright,
Gay in her air, and graceful to the ſight:
'Tis fair CLEORA! ſee, the ſplendours ſpread;
Her lucid orbs the bright effulgence ſhed!
Each look breathes love!—ye heedleſs mortals fly;
For dull the heart, that feels not when ſhe's nigh!

And

And falſe the tongue that dares aſperſe her name;
Alike ſhe ſhines in beauty as in fame!

And ſee each modeſt grace in DELIA's air,
Blooming as youth, and innocent as fair;
Mild as the beams that deck the vernal morn,
And ſweet as odours from the bloſſom'd thorn.
Her artleſs manners ſpeak the mind ſerene;
Too wiſe for pride, too humble to be vain:
From wit affected, and from folly free,
She charms with delicate ſimplicity.

With every grace, ſee FLAVIA appears!
The nobleſt form, the fineſt ſhape ſhe wears;
A thouſand darts are brandiſh'd from her eyes,
And from her air reſiſtleſs lightning flies.

With

With pointed wit, and energy of thought,
The wiſe are vanquiſh'd, and the fools are taught;
But native pride each tender paſſion wounds,
And ſhe's leſs bleſs'd, the more her ſenſe abounds!

Would FLAVIA taſte the pureſt joys of life,
Whether as maid, as mother, or as wife;
From kindred manners let her form her own,
And be for ſweetneſs as for ſpirit known.

AMELIA comes, with ſoft and placid mien!
The pureſt elegance ſupports her train;
The ſymmetry of ſhape, of eaſe the grace,
Lives in her form, and ſmiles upon her face.
To Virtue's precepts uniformly true,
Her heart deceit and falſhood never knew;

Ne'er

Ne'er ſpecious gloz'd, with guilty craft conceal'd,
Or heav'd the wiſh that might not be reveal'd.
She to ſound judgment joins a temper ſweet;
When grave not gloomy, and when gay diſcreet;
With goodneſs blends each paſſion of her breaſt,
And her ſole pride's to imitate the beſt.

If charm the fair when gaiety is o'er,
And giddy viſions vex the heart no more;
When youthful bloom is verging to decline,
And time matures the beauties of the mind:
Behold ASTREA! mark her ſober air,
Look on her heart, and lay her boſom bare!
There guilt and vice a refuge never found,
For Prudence' dictates all her actions bound;

Direct

Direct each look, reſtrain her as ſhe talks,
Nor ever left her in her evening walks.

Didſt thou, O DAPHNE, to thoſe pleaſing ſmiles,
Unite that ſenſe which ev'ry ſoul beguiles,
How hadſt thou ſhone diſtinguiſh'd midſt the fair,
And taught the boldeſt Love's ſoft bands to bear!
For thine the life that malice cannot blame,
The virtuous love of truth, the ſpotleſs fame;
For thine the eyes that ſpeak the native heart,
Gay without guile, and open without art.

But why, PRUDENTIA, that ſarcaſtick ſneer,
When Faſhion's plumes, or Gaiety draws near?
If Heav'n has giv'n you ſenſe, as ſome confeſs,
Would complaiſance and candour make it leſs?

Would

Would it debaſe thy worth, thy beauty ſpoil,
To cloath thoſe features with a harmleſs ſmile;
To drop the ſullen look, and formal air,
And dreſs, and think, and talk, like other fair?
True female beauty is an air divine,
That ſhould in ev'ry look and action ſhine:
In no fix'd tints it's lovely image glows,
Nor aſks the lily blended with the roſe,
The coral lip, and penetrating eye;
But ſhould o'er all the form diffuſive fly,
Inſpire each motion, wake each winning grace,
Smile in the look, and bluſh upon the face.

Aspasia ſmiles! nor ſofter is the gale
That gently fans the flow'r-embroider'd vale;

And ſweet the accents of that ſilver tongue,
As when an angel's golden harp is ſtrung!
She looks good-nature, emulous to pleaſe,
And breathes around complacency and eaſe.

MELISSA next the beauteous roll ſhall grace,
For parts ſuperior well deſerve a place.
Here mental ſtores protract the dying bloom,
Give preſent joy, and hope in years to come;
Amend each charm, th' exterior form improve,
And point the ſhafts that kindle laſting love.
While affability and candour pleaſe,
And wit refin'd from ſatire's bitter lees;
While taſte and judgment may diſtinction claim,
MELISSA's character ſhall merit fame.

Come, ELOISE! for innocence in thee
United ſhines with ſoft ſimplicity.
Thy tender breaſt no crime did ever ſtain,
Thy tongue ne'er gave a momentary pain:
The female arts thou never knew'ſt to try,
Or frame a thought not written in thine eye,
Celeſtial innocence, array'd in white!
Firſt-born of Paradiſe, and child of light!
'Tis with thy luſtre, beauty only ſhines,
Steals on our hearts, and captivates our minds;
Devoid of this, the fineſt features die,
Pall on the ſenſe, and diſappoint the eye.

Thy mincing mien, my MEMIA, claims the lay,
Though beauty ſhone not on thy natal day!

Yet, did thy charms the queen of love outvie,
And Cupids ſhot the lightning from thine eye.
Such affectation would deſtroy their pow'r,
And looſe thoſe ſlaves thy merit might ſecure:
For ſpotleſs virtue ſanctifies thy name,
And truth muſt own, a life that knows no blame;
A poliſh'd judgment, delicately nice,
And heart that bears no hatred—but to vice.

But know, FLAVILLA, that affected ſmile,
And MEMIA's manners plac'd in poorer ſoil;
Thoſe anticks ſpun from eaſy *politeſſe*,
Thy noding motions, and fantaſtick dreſs;
May pleaſe the ſimple, ſteal upon the crowd,
But never charm the well-bred, wiſe, or good.

FLAVILLA,

FLAVILLA, hear! the Muſe will ſet you right;
Be but yourſelf, and you will be polite:
Affect no graces, but what Nature gave,
And all your idle imitations wave.
Moſt charm the fair, when leaſt their art we ſee;
Nor need I other proof, but only thee.

The lovely contraſt in LAVINIA ſhines,
In whoſe juſt praiſe e'en hateful envy joins.
Of ſober manners, and of heart ſincere,
Peace in her eye, compoſure in her air:
Warm to her friends, and faithful to her truſt,
Can hear a ſecret, and can yet be juſt;
Can charm with ſenſe, beyond the reach of art,
And ſhews bright virtue glowing at her heart.

O Diſtance,

O Diſtance, ſink—give MIRA to my view!
A fairer image Fancy never drew!
With thee a thouſand charms and graces fled;
Thine eyes the ſweet delicious poiſon ſhed;
O'er all thy form unnumber'd beauties ſtray,
And blooming Venus yields thee half her ſway.
Return, return! and ſhine among the fair;
For thee thy ——— prefers his anxious pray'r.

Hence, HECATISSA!—know, my well-bred Muſe,
Nor courts thy favour, nor with hate purſues;
She deals no flatt'ry, draws no worthleſs name,
Nor lifts thy maſk, to light the bluſh of ſhame.

But who is this that burſts upon my ſight,
With ev'ry charm that can inſpire delight!

'Tis

'Tis Juno's preſence, and majeſtick mien;
Thoſe ſmiles are borrow'd from the Paphian queen!
And hark! the buſy whiſpers round proclaim
The bright LUCINDA's lov'd and honour'd name.
Each nymph retires; nor wit nor beauty dare
Abide the conteſt, and with her compare.
Such num'rous charms in her concenter'd ſhine,
The faireſt fade, and ſhun the air divine.
Thus fades the humble lily of the vale,
When blows the roſe, and ſcents the ambient gale;
Thus fly the ſtars, that ſtud the azure ſky,
When fair Aurora opes her purple eye.
O were my pow'rs but equal to my theme,
Poetick flow'rs ſhould ſtrew LUCINDA's name!
I'd paint her beauties in immortal ſong,
And numbers ſuch as flow'd from Dryden's tongue;

Nor

Nor ſhould a ſmile, a winning grace be loſt,
When kingdoms fall, and temples ſink in duſt.
Ah! how unequal to the taſk my lays;
Let others praiſe her deck'd with happier bays!
For me, let truth inelegantly tell,
The brighteſt virtues in her boſom dwell;
That wit, well temper'd, joins with ſenſe refin'd,
And ev'ry thought beſpeaks the poliſh'd mind;
That candour, taſte, and elegance, and eaſe,
Unite their charms, with manners form'd to pleaſe;
That all that's lovely, amiable, ſweet,
In bleſs'd aſſemblage in her tempers meet:
That Heav'n, tho' bounteous, could beſtow no more,
And grace on her has laviſh'd all it's ſtore!

Here

Here ceaſe my ſtrains—tho' yet remain unſung
Full many a maid, in beauty blooming young;
Full many a flow'r, juſt burſting on the day,
As Hebe gentle, and as Flora gay.
For theſe ſome youth may tune the future lyre,
And from their charms inhale poetick fire:
Enough for me, that with no partial aim,
I ſung of Beauty, for I felt it's flame;
And if I wiſh——O let not Beauty frown;
It's ſmiles are dearer than the Laurel crown!

LETTER III.

TRISTRAM B—N—R—D, Eſq. to RANTRUM SQUASH, Gent.

NEAR *Iſis* I write, where the Muſes keep court,
And the Graces and Phœbus for ever reſort;
From the ſeat of fair learning, of ſcience, and arts,
Where philoſophy blooms, and her influence darts:
Set free from the trammels and jargon of ſchools,
The ſtagyrites maxims, and pedantick fools;
Exulting ſhe ſhines in her genuine grace,
And wins ev'ry heart with the ſmiles of her face.

O had

O had I been bred theſe learn'd Doctors among,
I now might have been a great Laureat of ſong!
Profeſſor of *ſplayfeet*, with *braſſica* crown'd,
And heard *Alma Mater* my praiſes reſound;
Till by drinking I'd got my degrees in the gout,
And in chair with four caſtors been wheeled about:
For here living's good—as the *dead* pay for all—
And Dame Plenty is ſeen in each kitchen and hall.
The ſights I have view'd, O could you but ſee,
They would make you both ſtare and admire like me!
I have ſeen here fine Chapels, where ſeldom they pray;
And a Theatre—where there was never a play.
Of Books, I have ſeen ten thouſands in rows—
Excepting their titles, that nobody knows;
Of Manuſcripts, numbers which no one can read,
Kept only the eyes of the curious to feed;

Of Rarities, millions, bought up very high,
That a beggar, unbending, would proudly pafs by,
And deem them unworthy a glance of his eye.
With my theme I am loft and bewilder'd, I own,
For of half I have ſeen e'en the names are unknown;
And as large as a Family Bible would be
The book which contain'd all at Oxford you ſee.

Here are colleges twenty, of halls there are four,
Where is taught ev'ry ſcience, and ſpecies of lore;
And for riches, and beauty, and fine ſituation,
Bleſs'd *Oxford* may challenge each city and nation.
Nought on earth with it's grandeur and teachers can vie:
And learning's expences—*are no where ſo high.*

But could I in numbers make *Chriſt Church* appear,
It's platform of *canons* would ſtrike you with fear.
Yet it's books, and it's ſtatues, and pictures, are fine;
In it's hall, too, five hundred may ſociably dine.
I confeſs, I ne'er ſaw ſuch a room in my days,
So fit for a ball—and ſo Coz JENNY ſays:
But dancing is none of the *liberal arts*,
Tho' it wins and enchants ſo many ſoft hearts;
Tho' it's figures and kicks obtain more applauſe
Than the MATH. when his angles and ſections he draws.

GREAT TOM, in a tow'r of this college I ſaw,
Whoſe clapper each night to the ſtudents gives law:
While, "*Tace, O tace! per horam, ſis bonum;*
"*Comprime iram, ſupprime ſonum!*"

Is

Is pour'd out in vain, from the houſes of drink,
Where the ſtudents retire on their learning to think;
And their general theſis—for which I commend 'em—
Is for ever the ſame, "*Nunc, nunc eſt bibendum.*"

Already, you'll find, at deſcription I'm lame;
For who would mount here to hunt after fame!
So many have ſung, and have ſaid all before,
(Who bleſs'd by Apollo his laurels have wore)
That it would be preſumption in me to aſpire,
To rival their numbers, or write with ſuch fire.
I ne'er wore the cap, the taſſels, or gown,
And why ſhould I pant for a learned renown!
Yet the heads of the houſes, the doctors and all,
Have honour'd us oft at our lodgings to call.

For

For they all much reſpect my friend Mr. BEVIL,
And are wond'rous polite, good-natur'd, and civil:
Take delight to inform us of all we would know,
And ev'ry thing worthy of notice to ſhew.

Eight days we have here moſt ſociably ſpent,
And neither of coming have room to repent.
For my part, I never laugh'd more in my life,
Than to hear PRUE and JENNY, in half-ſerious ſtrife,
Of the dreſs academick expreſs each her notion.
PRUE ſaid it was grave, and becoming devotion:
JENNY ſcoff'd at the trenchers, and cut of the gown,
And declar'd there were many not worth half a crown;
So ragged and tatter'd they hung by their ſide,
She was ſure they could poorly their nakedneſs hide;

And proteſted e'en BEVIL ſhe could not admire,
When dreſs'd in ſuch ſtrange, ſuch ungraceful attire.
That if it was doom'd ſhe ſhould e'er be his bride,
The veſtments ſcholaſtick muſt be all laid aſide:
Like a man of ſome taſte, ſhe would have him appear,
The ſame as at *Chelt'nham* his dreſs and his air.
I bade her take heed leſt DAN BEVIL ſhould hear:
When, inſtantly ent'ring, "My JENNY, my dear!"
Exclaim'd the fond ſwain; "to your will I reſign
"This cap, and this gown, and theſe veſtments of
"mine;
"Only ſpare my fond heart, my ſuit but approve,
"And bleſs me with beauty, with friendſhip, and
"love!"

She

She ſpoke ſomething witty, but what I forget,
And bade him no longer ſoft nonſenſe repeat.
But I firmly believe, they will ſoon ſettle matters,
And join at the altar in Hymen's —— fetters *:
For JENNY's diſcarded her regiment of beaux,
And BEVIL attends her wherever ſhe goes.
It was him who projected this learn'd expedition,
And obtain'd leave for PRUE of her truſty phyſician.
And ſo well in their tempers they ſeem to agree,
Each ſo pleaſing to all, ſo engaging and free,
That conjugal joy muſt their union attend,
With ev'ry delight that chaſte Hymen can ſend.

* The writer leaves Bevil and Jenny to ſupply the *epithet*.

And what, O my friend! with that bliſs can
compare,
To have, and to hold, and poſſeſs the lov'd fair!
To watch over beauty, preventing it's ſighs,
And to read ev'ry paſſion that beams from it's eyes:
To meet with a friend when misfortunes appear,
Whoſe ſmiles and affection can drown ev'ry fear;
Whoſe boſom can feel and divide ev'ry pain,
And whoſe tongue, like an angel's, can ſoothe us
again?

In fact, I have form'd an intention to marry,
And for love, not for riches, alone will I tarry.
O pray that kind Heav'n may ſend me a wife,
A foe to contention, and ſquabbling, and ſtrife;

A friend to ſoft eaſe, with contentment well bleſs'd,
Whoſe heart to each paſſion but love is at reſt!
With ſenſe and good-nature, and beauty in ſtore:
Grant me this, ye kind gods, and I'll aſk for no more!

But hark! the coach is at the door:
I cannot add one *ſplayfoot* more.
To *Oxford* quick I bid adieu,
Dear *Chelt'nham's* pleaſures to renew.
Till then, I am your humble ſervant,
Tho' not of forms too much obſervant,

OXFORD,
1781.

T—— B—N—R—D.

LETTER IV.

Miſs JENNY W—N—R, to Mrs. ELIZA MEADOWS*.

IF any Letter yet remain
I wrote from *B—h* in giddy ſtrain;
Fulſome, panegyrick verſe,
That tried falſe pleaſures to rehearſe;
Odes that dar'd with rapid flight,
To reach Parnaſſus' airy height;
Aught that mentions ROMEO;
To the flames O bid them go!

* The late Miſs ELIZA M—D-LESS.

Spare

Spare the bluſh, my folly hide,
And plunge them in Oblivion's tide!
Early youth but viſions ſees;
The mind clears up by ſlow degrees:
Like miſts the human errors lie,
That vaniſh as the ſun gets high.
At *B—h*, I follow'd Pleaſure's queen,
Thro' each varied, motley ſcene:
Balls, and plays, and concerts gay,
Stole the precious hours away.
Pleaſure was my daily theme;
Pleaſure was my midnight dream!
Fair illuſions charm'd my eyes;
Folly ſpread it's fine diſguiſe:
Now it's influence is o'er,
And partial views deceive no more!

Bleſs'd,

Bleſs'd, my friend, in rural eaſe,
And all that can delight or pleaſe;
By brooks and rills you ſpend your prime,
Nor mourn the lapſe of guiltleſs time.
No folly ever ſtain'd your breaſt;
No faſhion ever broke your reſt:
You never knew refined art,
Or felt ambition at the heart;
You never trod the dreary round,
Where hapleſs Grandeur's toils abound;
Where real Pain takes Pleaſure's name,
And wantons in a ſpecious fame.

O had I never learn'd to ſtray,
In Grandeur's fair, but thorny way!

O had

O had I lov'd the rural ſhade,
And liv'd a ſimple, artleſs maid;
With manners only drawn from ſenſe,
And Prudence been my ſole defence!
No ſighs this boſom then had torn,
For time miſpent, for hopes forlorn;
For reſtleſs cares, ambition vain,
That ſows the ſeeds of ſhame and pain!
But now the proſpect brightens wide;
My hopes enlarge on ev'ry ſide;
The ſolid ſweets of life I ſhare,
And baniſh Faſhion's idle care;
In *Chelt'nham's* vale indulge repoſe,
Tho' ſometimes peſter'd with the *beaux:*
For here, as at all publick places,
Theſe animals will ſhew their faces.

But thanks to Cupid's godſhip blind,
For once I hope to ſee him kind;
To give a BEVIL for my lover,
And not a fortune-hunting rover.

And now, to truſt your faithful ear,
A ſecret I'll unfold, my dear!
A *real* BEVIL claims my love,
Whom ev'ry woman muſt approve.
To ſolid learning, taſte refin'd,
He joins an elegance of mind;
Manners free from ſervile art,
And kind benevolence of heart.
Wealth ſmil'd upon his natal hour,
(So leſs he courts me for my dow'r:)

An honeſt fame his life attends;
And Virtue loves to name his friends.
And ſhould he, to theſe graces bright,
Sincerity and truth unite,
Unſullied honour, conſtancy,
What nymph would be ſo bleſs'd as me!
I then ſhould glory to obey,
And fly where BRVIL points the way.

But how can words my joy expreſs,
For PRUE awak'd from ſuch diſtreſs!
From melancholy, deep deſpair,
And black, corroding, mental care;
From *ſuperſtition's* horrid gloom,
That blaſts and kills the faireſt bloom.

You'd ſcarce believe the change I ſee;
She wakes to friendſhip, life, and me:
Can ſometimes join us on the walk,
And deigns to hear our chearful talk;
Abjures the holy cheats of *B—h*,
And loves to tread this peaceful path;
To mend her ſpirits from this ſpring,
And in more lively notes to ſing.

And could the Muſe, my dear, rehearſe,
In poliſh'd and harmonious verſe,
The heart-felt ſweets we here enjoy,
(Which O may Faſhion ne'er deſtroy!)
You could not help to heave a ſigh,
Theſe guiltleſs joys with us to try;

To taſte the pleaſure *Chelt'nham* yields,
To breathe it's air, and range it's fields!
Here all live friends; no low-born pride
E'er tries deſpotick to preſide:
Society here twines it's wreaths;
Good-nature o'er our meetings breathes;
It's magick look the whole obey,
Whether at pump, at ball, or play.
And deep in *Chelt'nham's* hallow'd bow'rs,
The grave might ſpend their ſerious hours:
The gay no languor can invade;
The poet here may court the ſhade;
The beau on ſmiling Beauty ſtare,
And pale Misfortune dry it's tear.

But BEVIL comes; the play's begun,
And I with ſcribbling muſt have done.
For well I know,
My rhyme is low,
Nor worthy of your ear;
But while I live,
My faith I give,
To be the friend ſincere.

J. W—N—D.

POSTSCRIPT.

That BEVIL is a decent poet:
I hope the following ODE will ſhew it.

I might

I might have ſent you am'rous lays;

He writes prolifick in my praiſe:

But what I give, beſt paints his heart—

The friend of Nature, void of Art.

CHELTENHAM,
1781.

ODE

ODE TO NATURE.

WRITTEN IN

WHICHWOOD FOREST, OXFORDSHIRE.

AMID the variegated ſcene
Of bloſſoms, flow'rs, and herbage green;
Where twining ſhrubs enamour'd grow,
And oaks adorn the mountain's brow;
Enraptur'd let me tune the lay,
And ſing of NATURE, ever gay.

Celeſtial goddeſs! firſt of things,
When Time outſpread his ardent wings!

Who

Who erſt poſſeſs'd the ſpacious ball,
Rever'd, ador'd, and lov'd by all;
Ere Art, proud Art, with mimick grace,
Obſcur'd thy plan, or marr'd thy face;
Or dar'd deform thy holy reign,
And mix it's monſters with thy train!
Wilt thou vouchſafe to aid the lay,
That ſtrives thy beauties to diſplay;
And o'er the warblings of the Muſe,
The ſpirit of thy charms diffuſe?
Whether the craggy cliff or dale,
The purling ſtream, or flow'ry vale,
The moſſy bank, or ſhelly ſhore,
Or *Whichwood's* glooms delight thee more;
O hear a fond enthuſiaſt's ſigh,
And ſee his tear-empearled eye,

Becauſe rude Art uſurps thy throne,
And wears thoſe honours once thine own!

Come, lead me thro' thy bleſs'd abodes,
The ſeats of Innocence and gods;
Where green-rob'd Dryads gambol round;
Where dove-ey'd Peace and Health are found;
Where neat Simplicity retires,
And Friendſhip lights her pureſt fires;
Where hoary Faith, and mutual Love,
In uniſon delight to move:
For all that's noble, ſacred, fair,
Muſt ſhine in brighteſt luſtre there!

When Phœbus firſt, with golden beam,
Teaches the foreſt's top to gleam;

Or when, amid his fervid courſe,
On panting herds he pours his force;
Or when, at dew-beſprinkled eve,
He courts the ſmooth Atlantick wave;
With thee, O Nature! let me rove,
And find thy form in ev'ry grove;
Still on thy lovely features gaze,
And eye thy walks and devious ways!
Smiles aught below, devoid of thee?
Ah! no: thy charms are all to me.
If rapt by Fancy's magick pow'r,
Where *forms* engage each joyleſs hour;
To marble domes and ſplendid courts,
Where Art, deep maſk'd, performs her ſports:
How would I mourn thy rites prophan'd!
Thy name abus'd, thy viſage ſtain'd!

And Art exerting each grimace,
To mime the beauties of thy face;
Affecting graces thine alone:
For grace and beauty are thy own!

Unhappy great! to Nature foes;
How ſweet the pleaſures that you loſe!
Can tinſel pomp and equipage,
Your giddy minds ſo ſtrong engage?
Can gilded miſery, ſtate and noiſe,
Be deem'd the ſummit of your joys?
Ill-fated race! borne down the ſtream,
By poliſh'd Manners' ſpecious name,
You ſacrifice the tranquil hour
To pageantry and empty pow'r;

Forfeit

Forfeit the dulcet ſmiles of bliſs,
For mad Ambition's harlot kiſs;
And baniſh Nature's ſimple charms,
To fold Art's fopp'ries in your arms.

Can ſplendid domes, and gay alcoves,
Compare with verdant waving groves?
Can Perſian carpets richeſt dye,
With Nature's velvet veſture vie?
Mantles ſo bright the vinous bowl,
Round which diſeaſe and furies howl;
As cryſtal ſprings and limpid rills,
Purling adown the laughing hills?
Or breathes ſo ſweet the lulling lute,
And ſoft meanders of the flute;

As love-ſick Philomela's lay,
Join'd with the concert of each ſpray,
When young ey'd Spring awakes the year,
And choriſters the woodland chear?
To the eye of native taſte,
To the uncorrupted breaſt,
Shines ſo bright the diamond's blaze,
The maſquerade, or mingled rays
Which a thouſand flambeaux pour
O'er the health-deſtroying hour;
As the ruſticks chearful dance,
When Heſper bids the ſtars advance;
The blithſome frolicks of the green,
Where Love and Innocence are ſeen;
Where Beauty ſhines without diſguiſe,
And heart-felt paſſions light the eyes?

To me the ſhepherd's artleſs tale;
His ſighs, that mingle with the gale;
His anxious cares, his joys, his fears;
His jealous doubts, and tender tears;
The natural terms that paint his love;
The verdant ſcenery of the grove:
Are far more pleaſing than the ſtage,
Tho' SHAKESPEARE wrote th' impaſſion'd page;
And GARRICK ſtill with tragick art,
Could point each word to touch the heart!

O taſte corrupt! eſtrang'd to bliſs,
To ſmiling Peace and Happineſs;
Periſh your hated, baneful ſway!
And haſte, O haſte! propitious day,

When

When Nature, thou that charm'ſt the wiſe,
Shalt with exalted honour riſe!
Smit with thy love, O let me trace
Thoſe ſeats, where thou in awful grace,
Or mildeſt beauty, reign'ſt alone,
And guilty Art is yet unknown;
Direct me, NATURE, to thy ſhore;
For never mortal lov'd thee more.
Dwell'ſt thou on *Andes* rocky brow;
Or midſt th' untrodden flow'rs that grow
Where the ſea-like *Plata* ſtrays,
And works it's wild meand'rous ways?
Sit'ſt thou amid eternal froſt,
On *Iceland's* ſolitary coaſt?
Or on the *Alpine* mountains hoar,
Hear'ſt thou of driving ſtorms the roar?

Midſt

Midſt flaming *Ætna's* heaving mine,
Do'ſt thou delight in awe to ſhine;
Or lov'ſt ſome ſea-beſprinkled iſle,
Where human feet ne'er ſtamp'd the ſoil?
Yes! there thou dwell'ſt; nor there alone
I ſee thy venerable throne:
Where'er I turn my eyes around,
Thy fair profuſion cloaths the ground;
In ev'ry lawn and op'ning glade,
Thy ſmiling honours are diſplay'd;
And *Whichwood's* deep, embow'ring glooms,
With all thy ſapphire colours blooms.

Whichwood! how dear thy bleſs'd retreats;
Thy moſſy banks, and rural ſeats!

Thy waving groves, thy hamlets mean,
Where Poverty with brow ſerene,
Where Innocence and Peace reſide,
And down life's current gently glide!
Thrice happy they, who here retir'd,
With envy nor ambition fir'd;
Content thoſe cravings to ſupply,
That Nature views with wiſhing eye;
Enjoy thy pure ſalubrious air,
And ſee thy proſpects wide and fair;
The fragrance of thy flow'rs inhale,
And feel Heygeia in each gale.
With rapture beating at my breaſt,
Each vexing paſſion lull'd to reſt,
Oft let me thread thy tangled brakes,
Soon as the dawning day awakes;

Traverſe thy velvet-mantled lawns,
Where graze thy flocks, and ſport thy fawns;
Aſcend thy ſlopes, and pierce thy groves,
To liſten to their warblers loves;
Or to thy limpid rills retire,
And cool the ſun's meridian fire;
Then reſt ſupine, where branching trees
Exclude his unremitting breeze:
Or oft with tranſport turn an eye
On the ſcenes that round me lie;
Mark yon river's mazy bed,
Where many a willow rears it's head;
Catch the village echo far;
See num'rous ſpires aſcend in air,
With ſhining domes in trees embrac'd,
And Nature mix'd with *genuine* Taſte;

All the varied landſcape view,
Till the high hills are loſt in blue.

There let me tune the vocal lyre,
And, Nature, thou my voice inſpire!
Here meditate the lyrick ſtrains,
That WARTON pipes on *Iſis'* plains;
Admire each ſoul-enchanting line,
And catch ſome grace to call it mine.
From HAWKINS' Muſe attempt to pleaſe
With native, unaffected eaſe;
Learn all deſcription's force from PYE,
And with his ſtrains immortal vie:
From lovely CRAVEN's comick vein,
Of human nature, knowledge gain;

Whoſe attick wit, and genius bright,
O'er gloomy care can throw delight;
Who paints the ſcene that Nature ſhows,
Nor ſuffers Art to interpoſe!

Thus thro' life's valē O let me ſtray,
In mild Contentment's placid way;
Nor court the favour of the great;
Nor ſpend a ſigh for wealth or ſtate;
Nor wiſh in Fame's broad roll to ſhine:
But be the ſocial pleaſures mine.
All the joys O let me prove,
That ſpring from Conſtancy and Love;
From Heav'n receive the friend ſincere,
To taſte my bliſs, or ſoothe my care:

And ſince pure Nature's wants are few,
Let me her ſimple plan purſue;
To Virtue's love reſign my heart,
And never know deluſive Art.

LETTER

LETTER V.

TRISTRAM B—N—R—D, Esq. to RANTRUM SQUASH, Gent.

THE sun is just leaving Ma'am Thetis's bed,
And looks like a rake-hell, all fiery and red:
While I sit in a cottage not far from the well,
(Where a couple of worthy good christians dwell)
To see all the company coming to drink,
And am quite in the humour to scribble and think.
Last night at the play I was strangely affected,
Where Lear, poor old Lear! was most feelingly acted:
And the high-wrought distress taught my heart to o'er-
flow,
Till I feasted on all the luxuriance of woe.

To

To Nature and *Shakeſpeare* due tribute I paid,
And bleſſed Cordelia, that dutiful maid!
Whoſe filial affection deſerves higher praiſe,
Than can flow from my pen, or be told in my lays:
While her ſiſters, whoſe hearts the fell furies had bound,
And with dire inhumanity compaſs'd around,
Should only in infamy live, and their name
Be preſerv'd as the title of horror and ſhame;
As brands of reproach, and the deepeſt diſgrace,
To children that filial affection effaee.

O did we but mind what to parents is due!
When their fondneſs and love we recal to our view,
In infancy's helpleſs, unguarded eſtate,
When ſo many dangers each footſtep await;

When

When none but a parent could watch with ſuch care,
Soothe ev'ry affliction, and kiſs off each tear;
What heart ſo unfeeling, but homage would ſhew,
To thoſe whom our very exiſtence we owe!

But the company comes!—Firſt the coach of a *Lord*,
By all ranks, for his eaſy politeneſs, ador'd.
The title he bears adds no pride to his heart;
For he knows that it cannot one pleaſure impart,
Without the poſſeſſion of health and content,
Which Heav'n to each ſtation has equally lent.

Next, in all the parade of vain fopp'ry and pride,
In a chariot and four, with a w— by his ſide,
Comes a *name* that has roſe like a muſhroom, at once,
By baſeneſs triumphant, and fortunate chance.

How he looks with contempt on the *creatures* below,
And ſcarcely the *friend of his father* will know!
How he vies with the noble, in ſhew and in air,
Nor ever thought Virtue deſerving his care!
Yet, amidſt his abundance, he never knew reſt,
Or felt ſolid pleaſure pervading his breaſt.

A party on foot next demands my attention—
There is PRUDENCE, I vow! who, with grace and invention,
Has gain'd the regard of ſome pious, good prieſt,
Who appears to have *ſcrambled* at many a feaſt.
How gravely they talk!—while JENNY behind,
With BEVIL, in ſofteſt confeſſion ſeems join'd!
From their eyes beam a mutual, reciprocal fire,
And Cupids the ſmiles of endearance inſpire.

A troop

A troop of fine ladies at diſtance appear;
But they walk to quick time, and will ſhortly be here.
What ſplendor is this!— 'tis H—R—T's bright eyes,
That ſhine with the luſtre of ſtars in the ſkies.
Minerva, and Juno, and Venus, combin'd,
Her form to adorn, and to poliſh her mind;
And amidſt her compeers ſhe ſhines like Diana,
From the Severn admir'd, to the Banks of the Banna.
She alone with Miſs JENNY in charms can compare,
And reſembles her much in her manner and air.

But who next will challenge a ſtroke of my pen?—
'Tis the *Friend of a Poet*—unhappieſt of men!
Who ſpent on a puppy much money and time,
And met, in return, only ſatire and rhyme.

By his ſide walks an honeſt, juſt *Limb of the Law*,
Who is fonder of truth, than of finding a flaw:
The joyous companion, the ſenſible friend,
And whoſe actions deſerved encomiums attend.

Next comes the warm Friend, and the *Guide of my Health*,
Whoſe favours I prize more than miſers their wealth;
Whoſe art Æſculapian, full oft has reſtor'd
That bleſſing, whoſe abſence is truly deplor'd.
To him half my pleaſures, my raptures belong;
He wak'd me to health, and inſpir'd me with ſong.

But what crowds all at once come tripping along;
Some laughing, ſome ſtaring, ſome humming a ſong!

Some

Some in carriages loll, (though 'tis very well known,
As they ſtill are unpaid for, they are not their own;)
While ſome walk on foot, who might decently ride,
If ſaving their money was not their firſt pride.

Each neighbouring country it's tribute beſtows,
Of beauteous virgins, of footmen, and beaux.
IRELAND, bleſs'd in it's braſs, ſends us many a ſwain,
Who once rais'd potatoes on *Liffy's* ſmooth plain:
And SCOTIA, that ſeldom the *ſcurvy* produces,
To this Well ſends her *laddies*, to ſweeten their juices.
CAMBRIA, too, ſends ſons, nor of daughters a few,
Though health with the goats o'er their hills they purſue.
And tho' they all grumble, ſtill grumbling they ſtay,
So ſtrong the enchantment, they can't get away!

For ENGLAND is juſt like the *Stygian* bourn;
It has roads to paſs *into*—but *none to return*.

At laſt comes a coach with the beſt of our peers,
Who 'midſt ſtate diſtractions and party ne'er ſteers;
In mercy debarr'd from the ſlav'ry and toil
That ambition endures for a *ribband* or *ſmile*.

O bleſs'd in thy fortune, anceſtors, and fame!
To thy country a pride, to her nobles a ſhame:
The Friend of the friendleſs, the helpleſs, and poor;
Ne'er yet went the hungry unfed from thy door!
Say, can all the pleaſures thy titles impart,
That play round the head, but affect not the heart,
Confer ſuch delight, as thy boſom muſt feel,
When the deep wounds of indigent Merit you heal:

When the poor, as along your fine viſtas you rove,
Enjoying each tranſport of friendſhip and love,
With eyes rais'd to Heav'n your beneficence bleſs,
And wiſh all your labours and proſpects ſucceſs!

This is pleaſure indeed—by the few underſtood,
Who the favours of Heav'n apply to do good:
And may I thus the path of true pleaſure purſue;
So bright an example ſtill keep in my view!
But I'm now grown quite moral——for once, pray, forgive,
And I'll ne'er write ſo mopiſh again while I live.

CHELTENHAM, 1781. T—— B—N—R—D.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

TRISTRAM B—N—R—D, Esq. to RANTRUM SQUASH, Gent.

IS Man, my dear friend, only doom'd to see care;
To meet with misfortune, and shudder with fear?
Should the Fanatick's gloom always cover his face;
Should he look like a *convict*, to shew he has *grace*?
Or may he in innocent pastimes partake,
And keep ev'ry feeling of pleasure awake?
May he yield without guilt to Society's call,
Feast his ears with soft sounds, or be gay at a ball?
May he smile upon beauty, teach beauty to smile,
And with Providence' bounties his sorrows beguile?

Yes!

Yes! ſurely he may—For why has kind Heav'n
Such a number of favours in charity giv'n,
If they were not intended to add to our bliſs,
And promote true delight when not uſed amiſs?

One would think ev'ry beauty I meet at this Well,
With her ſmiles was appointed my gloom to expel;
And laſt night at the ball, I imagin'd each face
Wore the charms of content, that my joy might in-
creaſe.
For know, to the ball of M—R—U we all went:
E'en PRUDENCE now turned an apoſtate ſaint,
As fond of the fun, and as gay as the reſt,
With ROGER entirely eraz'd from her breaſt.

And

And had I a voice, e'en as ſtrong as a lion,
And lungs like a jack-aſs, that for ever could bray on;
With as many tongues, as were once heard at Babel,
When all was confuſion, diſorder, and gabble;
I could not deſcribe, or define, or declare,
Half the pleaſures I felt, or the dancers were there;
Half the charms of the fair that enchanted all eyes,
And bade an elyſium of beauty ariſe;
Half the beaux that were powder'd, and very well dreſs'd,
Of light pumps, and light heels, and light *attick*s poſſeſs'd.

The fiddles ſtruck up; and, like a thyme border,
M—R—U all his company rang'd in juſt order,
The titles of rank obtain'd the firſt place,
And below ſat the commons—a plebeian race!

First, Lady BUMQUIVER, and Sir WILLIAM WADDLE,

In a *minuet* roſe, to hop and to paddle.

Such grace to each motion their corpulence gave,

Encomiums to pay, as unable, I wave:

Enough that the *ſmile* of complacence attended;

And all eyes were downcaſt when their dancing was ended.

Next, the lovely Miſs JENNY, by each one admir'd,

Whom the Loves and the Paphian goddeſs inſpir'd,

With her beau academick the *minuet* grac'd;

While numbers too plainly their envy confeſs'd:

Tho' praiſes affected were us'd to conceal

The black diſpoſition they durſt not reveal.

But who is that gentleman, dreſs'd with ſuch taſte,
With his coat and his waiſtcoat ſo very well lac'd?
'Tis Captain MAC BLUSTER; with Miſs PEGGY GAY,
Whom, *en militaire*, he but courts to betray:
She is bleſs'd with each charm; he adorn'd with a ſword;
She a goddeſs indeed—he the *ſon* of a lord.

A few more, ambitious to ſhine in the *ton*,
And of having their taſte in the *minuet* ſhewn,
Deſcrib'd the ſame figures as others had done;
Till *cotillions*, outlandiſh *cotillions*, begun.
And who can imagine the lovely appearance,
The ſmiles of delight, and the looks of endearance,
That pervaded the whole, as they wheel'd round and round,
Like geeſe in the air, or like ducks in a pond.

That

That ſimile's low—'twas like NEPTUNE's *machine*,
That rolls on the ſurface of ſeas when ſerene,
Nor dips in the wave—ſo ſkimm'd the ſweet fair,
While clouds of perfume broke looſe from their *hair*;
And the goddeſs of *ſmell*, (if ſuch goddeſs there be)
Exulting, ſnuff'd up all the ſcents that got free.

But now, on a ſudden, the fiddles grew louder;
The beaux kick'd their heels, and beſcatter'd their powder.
Country dances were call'd for, the echo went round,
And each heart was tranſported with joy at the ſound;
For now ev'ry rank and each age came in play;
Both the young and the old, and the grave and the gay:
And *they* certainly are the beſt ſuited of any,
To humour the fancy and taſte of the many.

I ought to adore them—for Fortune, kind dame,
Gave a partner to me, who has kindled Love's flame.
Such grace and ſuch dignity ſhone in her mien,
She mov'd like a goddeſs, and look'd like a queen.
But although ev'ry breaſt at her preſence felt warm,
Unconſcious ſhe ſeem'd of her power to charm:
Tho' love beam'd from my eyes while I gaz'd on her face,
Yet ſhe look'd unaffected, nor heeded my caſe;
Neither acting the prude, nor the eaſy coquette,
Who often catch hearts, which again burſt the net;
But with goodneſs and mildneſs engaging the heart,
Nor ſhewing one veſtige of folly or art.
In ſhort, ſo much worth I have found her poſſeſs,
That all panegyrick muſt make it ſeem leſs.
I ne'er was ſo ſtruck ſince the fair-ſex I knew:
I but look'd—and my heart was quite loſt at one view.

And

And if Cupid proves mild, I'll ſubmit to his ſway,
Quite happy his godſhip's commands to obey;
For love is a paſſion the ſoul to refine,
And ev'ry affection in uniſon join;
'Tis the honour of Nature, that meaſure of joy,
Which time nor misfortune can ever deſtroy!

So it's votaries ſing——but the Stoicks declare,
'Tis the ſource of anxiety, ſorrow, and care:
A flame that conſumes—a vile ſnake in the breaſt,
That wounds with leaſt mercy, where moſt it's careſs'd.
And let them thus prate—I'm reſolv'd not to mind 'em,
But, philoſopher like, take things as I find 'em;

It's

It's ſweets and it's bitters I'll mingle together,
Nor expect all of one, without ſome of the other.

What events unforeſeen often riſe to our view,
When objects quite diff'rent we mean to purſue!
I came here for my health, and my blood to refine;
And PRUE to forget her conventicle whine:
She has pick'd up a parſon laſt night at the ball;
I am fall'n in love, *over head, ears, and all.*
JENNY ſoon will be married——a fine expedition!
All likely to *change*, if not *mend* our condition.

Hail, *Chelt'nham*, for ever! from thee we all prove,
The bliſsful enjoyment of health, peace, and love.

With

With what heart-felt regret ſhall I bid thee farewel,
And mourn thy paſt ſeaſon, and full-flowing well,
Where the whole of my life I delighted could dwell.

But Fortune and Fate, by which all men are led,
Have otherwiſe fix'd for,

Yours,

CHELTENHAM,
1781.

T—— B—N—E—.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

PRUE B——N——R——D, to Mrs. ELIZA MEADOWS.

NOT more delight the pilgrim feels,
When ſpent with toil and heat,
Amid Arabia's burning waſte,
The flowing rill to meet;

Than ſoothes my breaſt, my heart pervades,
When Mem'ry aids my bliſs;
Contraſts the horrors once I knew,
With what I now poſſeſs.

Now

Now Reaſon's light illumes my ſoul,
The gloomy ſpectres fly;
Religion, in her native charms,
Is preſent to my eye:

She ſhews no terrors in her face,
No dread command ſhe bears;
Heav'n ſent her for more gracious ends,
A cordial for our fears;

To wipe Afflictions tearful eye,
To conquer Grief and Pain;
To point a path thro' fears and cares,
Where endleſs pleaſures reign.

And Heav'n in mercy will forgive
The frailties of my heart;
If, by falſe doctrine led aſtray,
I fell the prey of art.

Yes! penitence from Heav'n will gain
Remiſſion of the deed;
While mortals, guilty as myſelf,
Still make my mem'ry bleed.

But let revilers ſtain my name;
Their arrows I contemn:
I gain'd compaſſion from above,
And know to pity them.

The joys of health, of life, and peace,
Reviſit me again;
O'er all my heart their influence ſhed,
And baniſh mental pain.

Care ſhall no longer waſte my hours,
Or gloom oppreſs mine eyes;
Bleſs'd Reaſon bids me taſte each bliſs
That Providence ſupplies.

Heav'n has not pour'd it's favours down,
And ſhed it's gifts in vain;
Diſplay'd it's bleſſings to our view,
Yet bade to taſte refrain.

No! ev'ry bounty I'll enjoy,
That Providence has ſent;
And chearfulneſs ſhall paint my looks,
And ſpeak my heart content.

Such is the homage moſt approv'd,
By Him who loves to ſee
His creatures happy, pleas'd, and bleſs'd,
And bound in charity.

Not thus Deluſion taught me once:
But ſpare my conſcious ſhame!
And bleſs, with me, that Pow'r who loves
The wand'rer to reclaim.

CHELTENHAM,
1781.

P—— B—N—R—D.

LETTER VIII.

TRISTRAM B—N—R—D, Eſq. to RANTRUM SQUASH, Gent.

COME on, my dear RANTRUM, and prick up each ear;
For a ſtory that wants much belief you ſhall hear.
Yet 'tis true, as that water is weaker than wine,
Or that ſilver than gold is leſs coſtly and fine.
"What ſtory?" you'll ſay. "No longer digreſſion;
"For I hate all your quibbling, and tantalization."

Well, the ſtory now comes!—Siſter PRUDENCE, this morning,
Of courtſhip the tedious formality ſcorning,

To

To the Parſon, twice met, at the altar was join'd;
In ev'ry reſpect juſt the man to her mind!
And God bleſs them together! may joy be their lot,
When the SQUINTUMS and ROGER are dead and forgot!

Some learning he has, with ſome tithes and eſtates,
And oft with his patron ſmoaks, tipples, and eats.
Yet, believe me, no ſervile toad-eater is JEROME;
But makes both the poor and the rich come to hear him.
Neither laughs at religion, to flatter the great,
Nor honours the ſcoundrel exalted in ſtate.

'Tis a very good match—and ſo JENNY allow'd;
Who, likewiſe, this morning, to Hymen has bow'd,
With BEVIL, the pride of her heart and his college;
A man of true virtue, taſte, wit, and ſound knowledge!

With

With fortune enough to be knight of the ſhire;
Though his ſenſe will direct him to titles much higher:
To obtain a good name from the rich and the poor,
And the bleſſing of want, that goes fed from his door.

Did a lady now ſcribble, her pen would expreſs
The very *minutiæ*, and cut of each dreſs,
In which both the brides and the bridegrooms appear'd,
While over their heads Hymen's torches were rear'd.
She would paint e'en their looks, how they whimper'd and ſigh'd,
When the Gordian knot was by *Clericus* ty'd.

From me no ſuch ſtuff—they were dreſs'd very fine:
PRUE look'd very decent—JENNY ſeem'd all divine,

And

And boldly repeated that great word *obey*;
But PRUE was ſcarce heard—as if tears choak'd the way.

What tumult, and buſtle, and rattle is this!
'Tis a *Lord* and a *Lady*, a *Maſter* and *Miſs*;
All come to pay viſits of congratulation,
And to wiſh them long life, and quick procreation.
Well—I'll ſit here and ſee—for 'tis beſt to be quiet,
And keep at a diſtance from nonſenſe and riot.

But who's this comes next!—tis a *Ducheſs* in chair,
Enough for four ſtrong *Iriſh* porters to bear!—
What troops follow after!—I muſt quit my retreat;
The de'il take the form and parade of the great!

One

One hurry is over—but cares come behind;
We muſt leave this ſweet place the moment we've din'd,
And poſt off to town, on a party of pleaſure:
The plan was hard preſs'd, I fell in with the meaſure.

But what pleaſure for me, while apart from my love,
Since the chain of regard I muſt drag as I move!
Let me mount the fleet ſteed, let me loll in the chaiſe,
Or, mix'd with the gay, on their fopp'ries gaze;
Let me ſee *Il Feſtino's*, *Al Freſco's* and Balls,
And ramble where Folly her votaries calls;
Still deeper and deeper ſhall ſink in my mind,
A regard for thoſe objects I now leave behind.

For I'm griev'd to the heart,
With *full purſe* to depart,
And quit this adorable ſeat;

And may all who love health,

Without ſquand'ring their wealth,

Make *Chelt'nham* their ſummer retreat!

CHELTENHAM,
1781.

T—— B—N—R—D.

FINIS.